

A Bit of Dirt

Volume 5 Issue 16

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The Newsletter of Gwinnett Master Gardeners



A Bit of Dirt is published quarterly. Editor for this issue is Gail Martin. If you wish something published, please contact me at 770-381-2513. We welcome all contributions.

FUTURE MEETINGS

September 8, 7:00 at GJAC, 2nd floor conference room. Jackie Heyda will speak on "Gardening for Birds".

October 13, 7:00 at GJAC. Becky [unclear] will discuss dried florals.

November 10, 7:00 at GJAC. George Sanko and Thelma Glover, South DeKalb Campus Native Plant Garden.



"I've had a long love affair with the environment. It is my sustenance, my pleasure, my joy. Flowers in a city are like lipstick on a woman - it just makes you look like you have a little color."

Lady Bird Johnson

A Note to My Friends, the Master Gardeners of Gwinnett County

Since the winter of 1993-1994, it has been my privilege and honor to be, along with Gail Martin, Co-Editor of **A Bit of Dirt**. It is the first and only newsletter just for Gwinnett's Master Gardeners and I am proud of it.

Now I must step down and hand over command to Gail, who I'm sure will do a fine job.

My best friend, my husband Wade, has been stricken with a serious illness. It is my pleasure and honor to care for him now.

I wish to thank you for giving me time to recover from the shock. I especially want to thank those of you who have sent cards and notes. The card with all those names on it is precious to me.

But most of all, thanks to those of you who have included us in your prayers.

Please continue to pray for us.

Sincerely,

Brenda Adams

*O, it sets my heart a clickin' like the tickin' of a clock,
When the frost is on the punkin and
the fodder's in the shock.*

James Whitcomb Riley

COMING ATTRACTIONS

Georgia Perennial Plant Association

7:30 McElreath Hall
Atlanta History Center

September 18 - Daniel Hinkley, co-owner of Heronswood Nursery, Kingston, WA. "Gardening in the Shade".

October 16 - George Sanko and Thelma Glover, South DeKalb Campus Native Plant Garden. "The Second Annual Academy Awards of Native Plants".

November 20 - Ozzie Johnson "Confessions of a Pusher: Crazy, Obsessed and Addicted, to Rare and Unusual Plants, that is."

AUTUMN

Autumn is upon us, this wonderful gardening season in the South. The days are long, warm and conducive to spending all possible time in the garden. The sky is a wonderful arch of cloudless blue, the heat of summer has left us for another year, there's a briskness to the air that causes us to breathe deeply in pure enjoyment.

September can be as warm as August, but there's a different feeling, a zestiness that was missing in the hot summer months. Not only are gardeners perking up, but our plants and flowers are enjoying the cooler weather and responding to it, as we are.

There is time now to reflect on the past season's successes and failures, and ways to have more success and fewer failures in the coming year. Time now to move the mistakes to a more favorable spot (assuming the mistake is still alive), and to plan new additions in harmonizing color schemes. There's an old saying that a plant isn't right until its been moved three times, and I think its also true that a gardener isn't satisfied until its has.

The pastel colors of spring have all gone by, and now the flaming colors of fall take precedence. The sourwoods are beginning to start the parade of fall color and are being joined by goldenrods and asters, helianthus and chrysanthemums. Soon the dogwoods will add their crimson to the palette, along with the flame of maples and the butter yellows of tulip poplars and gingkos.

Have you noticed how the colors of asters and chrysanthemums blend so beautifully with our autumn leaves? The shade of blue, pink and purple asters, fronted perhaps with yellow and

rusty red chrysanthemums blend harmoniously with fallen leaves at their feet. One of the prettiest vignettes of autumn I have seen were the bright red leaves of *Acer palmatum* 'Bloodgood' resting on the silver foliage of *Artemesia* 'Powis Castle'.

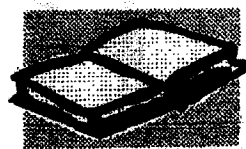
October brings trips to the mountains to view the trees, and increased activity in the garden, planting bulbs and perennials. Mornings become chill, and we put on a sweater to work outside, but in an hour or two the sweater comes off, and we enjoy some of the best weather of the year. There is still much color in the garden with the asters and salvias.

November starts warm with a continuation of October weather, but sudden cold fronts descend from the North, and we receive our first freeze. Time then to do a fall clean up in the garden, and as the leaves fall from the trees, we have the bonus of brown gold to add to our compost piles.



"This was one of those perfect New England days in late summer where the spirit of autumn takes a first stealthy flight, like a spy, through the ripening country-side, and, with feigned sympathy for those who droop with August heat, puts her cool cloak of bracing air about leaf and flower and human shoulders."

Sarah Orne Jewett



Here are a number of new and newish books written by Georgia gardeners that should be of interest to Gwinnett Master Gardeners.

In My Father's Garden by Lee May, AJC garden columnist.

Lee May's book is a highly personal account of how his gardening passion restored his relationship with his father. Garden people are as interesting as gardens, and Lee May is one that is nice to know.

Georgia Gardener's Guide by Erica Glasener and Walter Reeves

For newcomers to Georgia who are unfamiliar with red clay, heat and humidity, this is an excellent primer on what grows well here. It is also a quick reference complete with pictures, descriptions and growing needs for experienced gardeners.

Herbs Southern Style by Kathryn Doubriey

Kathryn lives and gardens in Crawford, GA, so her tips on growing herbs are locally oriented. The book must be ordered direct from the author, P.O. Box 384, Crawford, GA 30630. The book costs \$15.00

Gardening Round Atlanta by Avis Aronovitz and Brencie Werner

This book, written specifically for Atlanta area gardeners benefits the Atlanta Botanical Garden. It covers many questions on local gardening, and

"Books are gates to lands of pleasure"

Emilie Rousson

Pulmonaria

Pulmonarias have suddenly become hot items in the nursery trade. This can be attributed to new mildew-proof varieties, new interest in good shade plants, and their overall beauty.

These plants are often one of the early spring flowers that tell us spring is really here. The flowers range in color from salmon through raspberry to sky blue. Most Pulmonaria flowers turn different shades as they age, pinks to blues, wines to reds, but a few hold their color throughout the blooming period.

The foliage, however, stays with us all season, and provides exciting color variations in shady beds. Background colors vary from light green through cream to dark emerald. The silver spotting varies from lightly dusted spotting to solid silver leaves.

Beautiful combinations may be made with Hostas, Japanese Painted Fern, and the new dark Heucheras. Just imagine the silvery P. 'Excalibur' or P. 'British Sterling' planted with Heuchera 'Velvet Knight' or H. 'Chocolate Veil'.

Some interesting and beautiful cultivars are listed below. Some are relatively easy to find in the trade, others so new that they are difficult to find, but look for them.

- P. rubra 'Redstart' - A vigorous grower with salmon flowers, green leaves
- P. 'Bertram Anderson' - Small cobalt blue flowers, dark green leaves with silver spotting.
- P. 'Roy Davidson' - Light pink/blue flowers with broad, spotted leaves.
- P. 'Excalibur' - Gorgeous silver leaves on bright green. Flowers pink to blue.
- P. 'Milky Way' - Very large, spotted

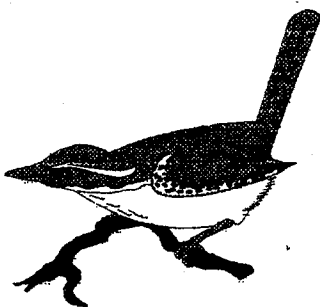
leaves and wine flowers

P. 'Spilled Milk' - Green foliage splashed with puddles of silvery milk, blue flowers

P. 'Berries and Cream' - Raspberry flowers

P. 'David Ward' - variegated form from Beth Chatto in England. Green leaves bordered with wide white margin, salmon pink flowers

P. 'Silver Streamers' - From Dan Heims with pure silver leaves, stippled and ruffled.



TAGGING BIRDS

Most all of us are bird watchers to some extent. Some of us feed birds year round, some only in winter; some of us set up birdhouses of remarkable architecture, some of us set gourds in our trees. Apparently our various state license tag designers (whoever they may be!) are getting into the bird watching act, too. We have all seen the Northern Bobwhite on new Georgia tags that benefit our Department of Natural Resources, and I'm sure that we've all seen South Carolina's Carolina Wren on the backs of Carolina cars.

But did you know that in total there are 19 states that show birds on their license plates? This could be a new travel game - see how many you and

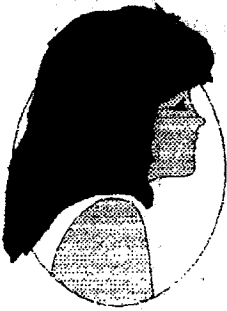
your children can find as you drive around. You'll have to look closely, as many are special issue tags.

American Goldfinch	Iowa
Brown Pelican	Louisiana
Bald Eagle	Indiana,
	New Jersey
Burrowing Owl	Florida
Common Loon	Maine
Carolina Wren	S. Carolina
Eastern Bluebird	New York
	Tennessee
Great Blue Heron	Maryland
	Ohio
Gulls	Alabama
	New Jersey
	Ohio
Kentucky Warbler	Kentucky
Mallard	Virginia
	Arkansas
Mountain Bluebird	Idaho
Northern Bobwhite	Georgia
Northern Cardinal	Illinois
	Indiana
	Ohio
	Virginia
Northern Saw-whet Owl	Pennsylvania
Osprey	Florida
Red-headed Woodpecker	New Jersey
Roseate Tern	Massachusetts
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher	Oklahoma

"Far overhead sounded a voluminous prolonged cry, like a great trumpet call. Wild geese flying ..."

Martha Ostenso





MY GARDENER FRIEND

by Cathy Moskal

She is a gardener. People who know her describe her as such. The way she looks at the world is through a gardener's eye. When I invite her into my home and apologize for the mess inside, I know she does not see random papers scattered about or dirty dishes. She sees the hardscapes of my house - the basic layout - the way she sees not a neglected flower bed, but rather the determined perennials and biennials which have made that bed their home. She treats the complaints of clashing personalities at the work place in the same manner as she deals with non-thriving plants in her yard, moving them to a sunnier or shadier location, allowing them to become an asset, not an eye-sore. She regards office gossip the same as invasive plants, a natural by-product some of which can be used to the garden's advantage. She believes that life is a learning experience, it is impossible to know all, and dangerous to hold fast to the same beliefs. Her mind never shuts out new ideas (old-fashioned herbs are now being rediscovered for their proven medicinal value - yet new medical research have proven some to be damaging - not beneficial, she tells me). A plant, which on first inspection appears to be a weed, but later proves itself to be a unique and interesting specimen plant, she parallels with people. She believes everyone possesses some knowledge which does enrich and beautify her life. She is my friend, and my hero.

The Last Garden

*My gardening days seem to be over
Except for three huge clay pots
In the front of my apartment door
Last year I grow some tomatoes
in the pots.*

*They were nice, small but tasty
This year I didn't want to grow
them.*

*Go the beautiful pots
made in Italy
by fellow.*

Maybe I'll grow some oregano.

Or flat-leaved parsley, or basil

*To go with the beautifully decorated
Italian red clay pots.*

*Or maybe there is still time for
glorious geraniums,*

or impatiens, or beguiling begonias

Or maybe

If I fertilize

And if the evenings grow cooler

I can plant some salad greens

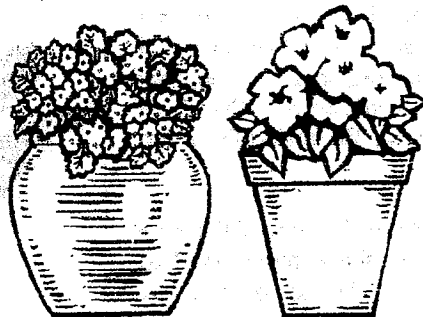
crisp, and bright

I'll think about it.

*But my gardening days seem to be
over.*

At least for this year.

Rhyllis Kravitz



*Pamper Your
Perennials*

**Sheila Wilbur invites you to a
Garden Adornment Show &
Sale Held in her Back Yard
Garden**

**Wednesday, September 10
Hours are 10:00am - 8:00pm**

Many garden adornment items will be for sale. An antique dealer with vintage arbors, gazing ball stands, etc. etc. Beautiful trellises fresh from the wood workshop, garden plant markers, herbal vinegars, hard to find plants, bird houses from Charleston, pillows, garden angel Tee shirts, Mantis tillers maybe be ordered, washable garden gloves and the book Georgia Gardener's Guide, signed by Walter Reeves and Erica Glasener, and much more. It will be a fun time for all. Come and bring a friend. Maybe you can find something special for that hard to buy for person on your list. Christmas is only 3 months away!

"Gardening and scholarship were not so different; both took long hours and single-mindedness, resiliency in the face of major setbacks, a gift for tedium and a flair for the marriage of the unusual. Both strained the eyes and lower back and depended to some degree on fate, prejudice, perspective and the intuitive flash."

Beverly Lowry

Sinai Peninsula

In the three years my husband and I have lived in Egypt we have made several trips across the Sinai peninsula and have found some of the most beautiful scenery in Egypt. The Sinai, like most desert areas is very barren. The scenery varies greatly from one area to the next. There are large sand dune seas and high mountain ranges with broad valleys in between. There are oases with lush vegetation around which communities have developed. The Suez Canal, Red Sea and the Gulf of Aqulia partially separate the Sinai from the Egyptian mainland and the Arabian peninsula.

In the western part of the Sinai there are great sand seas. Quite frequently when driving we encountered small sand storms which resulted in sand drifts across the road. They can be as dangerous as snow drifts. The great sand sea is fascinating and has a beauty all its own. The sand is very fine and very difficult to walk in unless you are a camel. We have seen camels wandering in the desert and they've discovered that it's easier walking on the road rather than in the sand. In the spring we've encountered many mama camels and their new babies. We've had some great photo opps.

In the central Sinai the mountain ranges begin and the rock formations are really interesting. There are red, green and white waving ribbons of colored rock in the mountains. There are valleys of white sand which are breathtaking. In some areas the sandstone is worn by thousands of

years of wind erosion and the formations are very interesting. There is also water erosion and large wadies (valleys) have been formed by the water runoff.

Driving from Talia in the eastern Sinai to St. Catherine's in the central Sinai are some of the most spectacular scenes on the whole peninsula. We travelled through the Sinai Grand Canyon with high mountain cliffs on both sides of the road. At one point we travelled through a mountain pass to view a beautiful white sand valley stretching for miles in front of us. Coming down from the mountains toward the sea we were amazed to find the mountains reached right to the water's edge and the water is the bluest of blue.

When my husband and I eventually leave Egypt we will miss our trips to the Sinai. The mountains and the sand seas, the rock formations and spectacular white sand valleys are pictures we will always carry with us. The sunsets and sunrises over the mountains and the sea have given us great joy and beautiful memories. If you ever have an opportunity to visit Egypt, don't forget to put the Sinai on your itinerary.

Barbara Troso



MOSSY CLAY POTS

The mossy patina of old clay pots is something it normally takes a couple of years to achieve. If you want to do it quickly and easily, here's the magic potion to use. The recipe for the aging solution (if I only knew the recipe for an anti-aging solution!) is pretty straight forward.

1 quart buttermilk
2 golf ball size lumps of moss
1 golf ball size lump of soil
1 container of yogurt

The moss contains the spores of the moss plant. The soil contains the soil microorganisms. The dairy products generally serve as food for the growing spores.

Paint it on pots or stone walls or whatever. Keep the mixture misted frequently and soon a generous patina of green will appear.

Trivia Quiz

1. Who made the garden at Sissinghurst?
2. Who was the hybridizer of the Shasta daisy?
3. What famous rose was carried out of France in a diplomatic bag at the beginning of WW II?
4. What is the common name for *Antirrhinum*?
5. Does Clematis climb by twining, clinging or leaning?
6. The flowers of what plant are called "little brown jugs"?
7. *Mertensia*, *Campanula*, *Forsythia*, *Halesia* and *Shortia* share a word in their common names. What is it?

(Answers on Page 6)

PPA National Conference

Sheila Wilbur

I just returned from the 15th annual National conference sponsored by the Perennial Plant Association. This symposium is held to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas that will benefit growers, retailers, and other professionals using herbaceous perennials. What a minnow I was in a pond with huge fish!

Pre-conference tours began in Asheville, NC. The group of ladies I was traveling with were all invited to stay in the lovely home of Jasmin and Peter Gentling. What a wonderful treat! The Gentlings have developed 3 acres of gardens since 1971. Blue Briar is the setting of 2 dawn redwoods that were brought from China in 1946. The Gentlings have designed and installed several unique perennial gardens.

Next we visited Peter Loewer's Lake Garden. Peter has built many trails and stone walls with a rhododendron thicket. The view with the lake is breathtaking.

On to the second day of the garden tours. The Botanical Gardens of Asheville, The North Carolina Arboretum was lovely. They have a spectacular Herb Quilt Garden. I will share my pictures when they are developed. The Blue Ridge Parkway with its beautiful wild flowers takes us to Raleigh.

Bright and early Monday the sessions, that contained a wealth of information began. The speakers were great; Brent Heath of the Daffodil Mart (currently has an article in October Fine Gardening) spoke on alliums and speciality bulbs for the landscape. Ken Miller of The Bug Store spoke on bug wars - Near Perfection Without Pesticides.

Day three we load the busses at 7:30

a.m. UGH! It takes 17 52 passenger buses to transport all 890 attendees.

Plant Delight Nursery, Tony Avent's mail order nursery, was one of my favorites. Tony has over 5,500 kinds of plants for sun and shade. The display gardens at Plant Delights were lovely. Niche Gardens, Kim Hawks, was a very peaceful place with serene display gardens and many plants to buy. The Niche Gardens catalogue has always been fun to receive. Now when I place an order I can visualize the gardens my plants will be shipped from. Montrose, now the private residence of Mr. & Mrs. Goodwin, was a sight to see. The gardens were started in the mid 19th century. This was formerly Montrose Nursery, now closed.

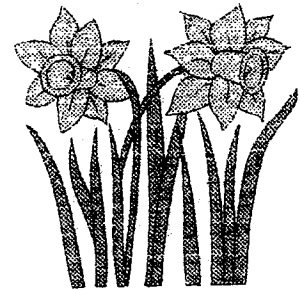
Back to classes with Mark Laviana, President of Sunny Border Nursery. The class material was on production of perennials. One of the highlight speakers was Edith Eddleman. As a student project Edith designed the North Carolina State University Arboretum borders in 1982. The three borders are now 470' long and 18' deep. These borders are featured in the book Gardens of the World. After touring her private home garden, filled with much whimsy, her talk was Big, Bold and Bodacious Plants for the garden. She entered the auditorium wearing a foot wide butterfly pinned to her shoulder. It brought down the house and she had not said a word yet. If you have ever heard her speak you know she is Big, Bold and Bodacious.

A few side gardens thrown in at the last minute were my favorites: Richmond Hill is a grand Victorian mansion built in 1889. Now it is an elegant Inn with great gardens to stroll in. A special romantic weekend at Richmond Hill Inn, overlooking the gardens, I hope is in my fall future.

The village of Farrington is a community built around an old dairy farm with lots of quaint shops and beautiful gardens. They are the settings for many weddings and festivities. You can also stay at the Farrington House Inn, not too far from Niche Gardens.

The last night we had a catered dinner on the lawns of the Sarah P. Duke Gardens. The gardens encompass 55 acres of landscaped and woodland gardens with over 2,000 kinds of plants. The sit down dinner was held under 5 of the largest tents I have ever seen. But remember, there were 890 tired and hungry people touring gardens all day. Fresh flowers adorned all the food tables and the meal was lavish. What a way to end a wonderful week.

If you plan a trip to the Research Triangle area of North Carolina which includes Raleigh, Durham and Chapel Hill, let me know and I will be glad to share with you the many public gardens.



"The public must learn how to cherish the nobler and rarer plants, and to plant the able, able to wait a hundred years for its bloom, or its garden will contain, presently, nothing but potatoes and pot-herbs."

Margaret Fuller

Answers: 1) Vita Sackville-West; 2) Burpee; 3) Peace; 4) Snapdragon; 5) Twining; 6) Asarum or Wild Ginger; 7) Bells